



The Planning Inspectorate Yr Arolygiaeth Gynllunio

Application for Development Consent for
The Wrexham Energy Centre
Case Ref: EN010055

Examining Authority's Note of Unaccompanied Inspection of Sites

Inspection 1: The application site and surrounds 25 & 26 May 2016

Background

The Examining Authority (ExA) undertook its **first unaccompanied site inspections** to support its examination of an application for development consent for the proposed Wrexham Energy Centre (the application) on 25 and 26 May 2016.

In the interests of efficiency, the ExA commenced its unaccompanied inspections before the Preliminary Meeting, undertaking inspections from publicly accessible land including highways and public rights of way. No inspections were undertaken on private land, advance permission to enter land was not required and so these inspections could be undertaken on an unaccompanied basis.

The inspections were undertaken to view the proposed application site as shown on the Land Plans [APP-007]. Locations prospectively within the setting of the development proposals in the application were also inspected.

The first unaccompanied inspections are recorded in this note, the purposes of which are:

- to inform the applicant, interested parties and other persons of actions already taken by the ExA; and
- to enable the applicant, interested parties and other persons to consider which additional sites the ExA might need to inspect.

Further site inspections may be required. The site inspection programme will be discussed at the Preliminary Meeting to be held on 19 July 2016. The applicant, interested parties and other persons will be provided with an opportunity to address the ExA on the approach that it should take to site inspections and to nominate site inspection locations. An opportunity will be provided to propose inspections of private land on an accompanied basis, should this be necessary.

Before agreeing to a site inspection at a particular location, the ExA will consider the degree to which it is necessary to visit a site that has been nominated for an inspection to inform it about the application. It may

decide not to visit nominated locations where it considers that it is not necessary to see the features to be observed there. It may decide not to hold an accompanied site inspection if all relevant features can be observed and understood from locations in the public domain.

Arrangements for any accompanied site inspections will be included in the ExA's examination timetable and procedural decision to be issued after the preliminary meeting.

If further inspections are carried out, further inspection notes will be published.

Particulars of the Inspection

The first unaccompanied inspection was undertaken by the ExA: Examining Inspector Mr Rynd Smith LLB MA MRTPI FRSA. There were no other persons in attendance. The purpose of the visit was for the ExA to become familiar with the application site and surrounds and the landscape and visual impact assessment study area referred to in the Environmental Statement (ES) at Chapter 10 and shown on the Landscape and Visual Effects Figures 10.1 – 10.6 [APP-058, 088 - 097].

Afternoon of 25 May 2016

The first part of the inspection was undertaken by car and on foot on 25 May 2016. Weather conditions were cloudy but dry; adequate to appreciate short, medium and long range views towards the proposed development from each of the locations that were inspected. The visit that day focused on the application site and its northern, eastern and southern setting within Wrexham County Borough, west of the River Dee.

The inspection commenced at approximately 3.30pm, approaching Wrexham Industrial Estate (WIE) via the A483 Wrexham bypass, the A5156 link road, the A534 and Industrial Estate Road (North). Proceeding from Industrial Estate Road, the ExA followed Bryn Lane to the western boundary of and main entrance to the application site which was viewed on foot from the boundary. The Kellogg's premises were observed and its chimneys were used as a visual reference point for views towards the application site. The application site was then circumnavigated on Ridley Wood Road, the B5130, Oak Road and Bryn Lane, returning to the site entrance. Views to the site were obtained on foot from a number of locations on this route, both within and beyond the eastern boundary of the WIE.

The car was used to access the following visual receptor group locations shown on the Landscape and Visual Effects Figure 10.4 (a) & (b) [APP-094 - 095]:

- 23 – application site main entrance, WIE;
- 19 – Ridley Wood Road / B5130;
- 20 – Marshley Farm / B5130;
- 21 – Higher Farm, Isycoed; and
- 22 – residences at Sutton Green.

Lanes around Isycoed between the B51530 east of the application site and west of the River Dee were driven, observing individual farms and dwellings, St Paul's Church and school, the village at Isycoed and dwellings at Sutton Green. Views towards the application site were obtained.

The relationship between the application site and the west bank of the River Dee was then explored on foot, commencing at Sun Lane in Sutton Green, using footpaths 2, 15 and 12 shown on the Landscape and Visual Effects Figure 10.4 (a) & (b) [APP-094 - 095] to access the valley floor and the riverside. Returning to the car at Sun Lane, Sutton Green, the B5130 was then driven from Bowling Bank via Cross Lanes to the junction with the A528 north of Overton. The visits undertaken on 25 May concluded at 7.00pm.

Morning of 26 May 2016

The second part of the visit was undertaken by car and on foot on 26 May 2016. Weather conditions were again cloudy, and periodic rain showers reduced long range visibility for short periods. However, dry periods between showers and improved visibility at those times meant that it was possible to appreciate medium and long range views towards the proposed development from each of the locations that were visited and all objectives for the visit were met.

The visit focused on land within the WIE, land to the west of the WIE between the estate and the urban area of Wrexham (within Wrexham County Borough) and land on the east bank of the River Dee within the authority areas of Cheshire West and Chester (England), an area historically described as English Maelor and now within Wrexham County Borough (Wales) and Shropshire (England).

The visit commenced at approximately 8.30am, approaching WIE via the A483 Wrexham bypass, the A5156 link road, the A534 and Industrial Estate Road (North). Proceeding from Industrial Estate Road, the ExA followed Abenbury Road, Coed Aben Way and Bridge Road North to gain an impression of existing use and development within WIE and views to the application site, again using the Kellogg's chimneys as a reference point. From 9.00am, the ExA viewed Redwither Tower on Abbey Road (North) as a possible venue for the preliminary meeting and hearings associated with this examination. From 9.45am, the ExA again viewed internal roads within WIE, including Fourth Road, Dutton Road, Dunster, Marlborough, Abbey (South), Oak and Redwither Roads, to gain an impression of existing use and development and views to the application site.

Moving beyond the WIE to the west, the ExA then used Bryn Estyn Road (west of the road closure), Erlas Lane and Redwither Lane to obtain an impression of the rural land to the west of the WIE and east of the established urban area of Wrexham. Cefn Road was driven northwards to the roundabout junction with Stryt Holt. Bryn Estyn Road was then driven

(east of the road closure) and then the closed portion (a cycleway towards WIE) was viewed on foot. Returning to Cefn Road by car, this was driven southwards to the southern entrance to WIE at Clwydog Road / Bridge Road South, enabling the entire eastern edge of the built-up area of Wrexham and its relationship to the landscape area west of WIE to be observed. The following visual receptor group location shown on the Landscape and Visual Effects Figure 10.4 (a) & (b) [APP-094 - 095] was visited:

- 15 – Erlas Lane (Footpath 6).

The following visual receptor group locations shown on the Landscape and Visual Effects Figure 10.4 (a) [APP-094] were visited:

- 17 – Cefn Road; and
- 16 – Bryn Estyn Road.

Exiting the WIE again via Industrial Estate Road (South), the ExA then travelled via the A525 and the B5130 to view the village of Cross Lanes (where the residential area and views from this area were observed from Bedwell Road, Briar Close and Fern Close), returning to enable views towards the southern section of the application site between Talwrn and Bowling Bank in which the gas connection (GC) and above ground installation (AGI) are proposed to be constructed.

The visit then travelled via the B5130 northwards to enable the following visual receptor group locations shown on the Landscape and Visual Effects Figure 10.4 (a) & (b) [APP-094 - 095] to be viewed:

- 5 – Pickhill Farm; and
- 7 – Oak Road / Bowling Bank.

Visual receptor group location 4 – Parkey Lodge Farm was not visited, as it appeared to be on private land.

Shortly before the junction of the B5130 with the A534 Wrexham – Holt Road, Francis Lane was followed westwards towards WIE and the application site. A road closure for water works prevented access to the final 500m of this road, connecting to Hugmore Lane and WIE. A location close to visual receptor group location 18 – Aldersey Farm shown on the Landscape and Visual Effects Figure 10.4 (a) & (b) [APP-094 - 095] was viewed, but the ExA remained on the road and did not follow footpath 24. Visual receptor group location 14 – Holt Lodge Farm could not be viewed at this time due to the road closure. Francis Lane was then followed eastwards, back to the B5130.

The visit then took the A534 Wrexham – Holt Road westwards, back to Hugmore and the roundabout intersection with Industrial Estate Road (north), enabling long range views to the south to be obtained of WIE and the application site. The following visual receptor group location shown on the Landscape and Visual Effects Figure 10.4 (a) & (b) [APP-094 - 095] was viewed:

- 13 – Cornish Hall and Holt Lodge at Footpath 25.

The visit then viewed the built up areas of Holt in Wrexham County Borough (Wales) and Farndon in Cheshire West and Chester (England). Locations close to the following visual receptor group locations shown on the Landscape and Visual Effects Figure 10.4 (a) & (b) [APP-094 - 095] were viewed:

- 12 – Footpath 2 (west of Holt);
- 11 – Footpath 11 (south east of Holt).

The B5069 was followed southwards from Farndon within Cheshire West and Chester (England) to enable views of WIE and the application site to be obtained from higher land on the east bank of the River Dee, including the environs of Shocklach. Footpath 2 and footpath 1 were followed on foot to provide views towards the application site and the WIE over the eastern bluffs and flood plain of the River Dee. The following visual receptor group location shown on the Landscape and Visual Effects Figure 10.4 (a) & (b) [APP-094 - 095] was viewed:

- 8 – Shocklach Green.

Returning to the English Maelor area of Wrexham County Borough (Wales) on the B5069, the visit viewed the rural area and villages of Worthenbury, Bangor-on-Dee and Overton. A location close to the following visual receptor group location shown on the Landscape and Visual Effects Figure 10.4 (a) & (b) [APP-094 - 095] was viewed:

- 3 – Bangor-on-Dee Racecourse.

The visit concluded at 12.45pm, leaving the English Maelor area of Wrexham County Borough (Wales) and entering Shropshire (England) on the B5069 between Overton and the village of St Martins.